



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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FIVE INDICTED ON CHARGES OF MANUFACTURING METHAMPHETAMINE

TAMPA—United States Attorney Paul I. Perez and Dominic Albanese, Special Agent in Charge of the Tampa Field Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”), announced today that JAMES EDWARD HOWZE, JR., age 47 of Zephyrhills, TERESA DEE SUTTON, age 36 of Lakeland, JASON WAYNE MEYER, age 28 of Zephyrhills, DONALD UNDERWOOD, age 47 of Lakeland and DEMETRIUS MCLAUGHLIN, age 29 of Dade City, have been indicted on charges of conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine and of possessing listed chemicals with knowledge or reason to believe that the listed chemicals would be used to manufacture methamphetamine. The investigation began after a fire broke out in an illegal methamphetamine laboratory in a residence in Zephyrhills, Florida, on July 13, 2002, which resulted in the prosecution and convictions of two former residents of Zephyrhills. Following the fire and associated arrests, the investigation expanded and ultimately led to evidence of methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution in Pasco, Polk, Hernando, Osceola, and Hillsborough counties.

The conspiracy charge carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years up to a possible maximum sentence of life imprisonment and potential fines of up to \$4 million. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Pamela Cothran, and has been investigated by DEA's methamphetamine task force, with assistance from Pasco County Sheriff's Office, Lakeland Police Department, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, and the Polk County Sheriff's Department.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.